

Freedom of Information request 520-23

Request

In June 2022 NHS England published a document entitled 'Improving the blood culture pathway' which included a few recommendations regarding blood culture collection and data that should be collected and reported on at Board level. Can you please provide me with answers to the following questions:

1. Does your Trust have a process for skin preparation/cleaning prior to blood collection? Y/N
2. Do you take two sets of blood cultures each time as recommended in the guidance? Y/N
3. If no, what percentage of patients do have two sets of blood cultures taken?
4. Do you measure the volume of blood taken each time a blood culture is taken (the recommended amount is 20ml per sample)? Y/N
5. Do you measure the time between blood sample collection and the sample being loaded onto an analyser instrument (the recommended maximum time is four hours)? Y/N
6. If yes, what is the average time?
7. Do you collect data on blood sample contamination? Y/N
8. Is the data described above reported at Board level as recommended?

Response

1. Yes, NHS Borders has a process for skin preparation/cleaning prior to blood collection.
2. Two sets of blood cultures are not currently taken from all patients who have a blood culture taken. More than one set is likely to be taken in patients with indwelling vascular access devices, those suspected of having endocarditis and patients with persistent / severe signs of sepsis.
3. This information is not held, as defined in Section 17, Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002.
4. NHS Borders do not routinely measure the volume of blood collected on an ongoing basis. We have studied over limited periods previously.
5. NHS Borders do not measure the time between blood collection and bottle loading. We do have a process to load samples periodically onto the machine out of hours with the aim of getting bottles loaded within 4 hours.
6. N/A
7. NHS Borders have not resumed a process that was being performed pre-pandemic of reporting blood culture contamination rates.
8. N/A

If you are not satisfied with the way your request has been handled or the decision given, you may ask NHS Borders to review its actions and the decision. If you would like to request a review please apply in writing to, Freedom of Information Review, NHS Borders, Room 2EC3, Education Centre, Borders General Hospital, Melrose, TD6 9BS or foi.enquiries@borders.scot.nhs.uk.

The request for a review should include your name and address for correspondence, the request for information to which the request relates and the issue which you wish to be reviewed. Please state the reference number **520-23** on this request. Your request should be made within 40 working days from receipt of this letter.

If following this review, you remain dissatisfied with the outcome, you may appeal to the Scottish Information Commissioner and request an investigation of your complaint. Your request to the Scottish Information Commissioner should be in writing (or other permanent form), stating your name and an address for correspondence. You should provide the details of the request and your reasons for dissatisfaction with both the original response by NHS Borders and your reasons for dissatisfaction with the outcome of the internal review. Your application for an investigation by the Scottish Information Commissioner must be made within six months of your receipt of the response with which you are dissatisfied. The address for the Office of the Scottish Information Commissioner is, Office of the Scottish Information Commissioner, Kinburn Castle, Doubledykes Road, St Andrews, Fife.